

FY 2007 Annual Program Performance Measures

DEPARTMENT:

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

APPROPRIATION UNIT: Boards and Commissions

PROGRAM: Michigan Commission for the Blind

Description of the Bureau/Agency:

The Michigan Commission for the Blind is a state agency designed to assist persons who are blind to achieve personal, social, and economic independence emphasizing jobs in the competitive labor market.

Vision Statement: If a person is going to be blind, she/he could not be in a better place than Michigan.

Mission Statement:

To provide opportunities to individuals who are blind or have visual impairments to achieve employability and/or function independently in society.

Main Components of the Bureau:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a partnership of the federal and state government to provide VR services to blind individuals throughout the State of Michigan. Some of the services provided are: Evaluations, counseling, job development, vocational training, college and technical training, low vision aids and follow-up services.

Independent Living Program

The Independent Living Program provides services to older blind individuals so they can remain independent in their own homes.

MCB Training Center

The Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center is a residential facility. The primary focus for the Center is assisting blind persons in developing more positive attitudes toward blindness and to help them attain the necessary skills to function independently.

Business Enterprise Program

Michigan Commission for the Blind's (MCB) Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides opportunities for blind persons operating vending stands and cafeterias in federal and state buildings as well as highway rest stops and visitor centers.

Youth Low Vision Program

The Youth Low Vision Program provides low vision evaluations and devices to visually impaired school age children throughout the state.

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Deaf Blind Services

The DeafBlind Unit of the Michigan Commission for the Blind provides statewide Vocational Rehabilitation services and/or Independent Living consultations to adults and high school students who are legally blind and have moderate to profound hearing loss.

Values in addition to DLEG's to which MCB subscribes:

We value people who are blind, skills of blindness and statewide activities that include, empower and enable individuals to make their own choices.

We value comprehensive and coordinated statewide vocational rehabilitation services producing employment outcomes in integrated settings.

We value comprehensive and coordinated statewide independent living services helping older blind individuals remain independent.

We value individual choice and individualized services in developing and implementing rehabilitation planning.

We value all agency staff and other agencies and organizations that serve people with vision and physical disabilities.

We value enabling technology that helps integrate consumers.

A description of how the Bureau/Agency align with the vision and major goals of DLEG:

The mission of the agency aligns with the DLEG goals/strategies of 1) integrate visions and values into DLEG; 2) create new investments/ job opportunities; 3) protect Michigan consumers; 4) provide excellent customer service; 5) provide rehabilitation and career development resources; 6) promote excellent labor-management relations; 7) provide access to affordable technology; 8) Human Capital – encourage an adaptive workforce; 9) Communities – foster cool cities.

Direct or indirect alignment of MCB with DLEG's four Strategic Roadway initiatives:

MCB is aligned to the following Roadways:

Entrepreneurship

- MCB continues to provide small business training and food service employment opportunities to visually impaired individuals.

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Retain and Grow

- MCB's main focus is to train blind individuals in many areas of employment so that they will be able to meet demand of tomorrow's job force.
- MCB Business Enterprise Program has been designing, implementing, and updating food services throughout the State of Michigan in conjunction with DMB. These locations are being aesthetically and efficiently designed to enhance food services to the residents and visitors of the State of Michigan.

Workforce

- MCB is committed to enhancing partnerships to maximize employment opportunities, increase public awareness and promote the independence of visually impaired individuals throughout the state.
- MCB is committed to provide accessibility, opportunities and resources for individuals with visual impairments to ensure successful fair employment prospects.

Description of how the vision and mission for the Bureau/Agency system is communicated to staff and customers:

The agency will provide all staff, partners, and customers with MCB's action plan and goals to be achieved. We will also post our goals, objectives and outcomes on our web site. In addition, our Vision and Mission Statements are included in our new employee orientation packet.

MCB also has an active Vision 2020 initiative that is an integral part of the agency. This initiative focuses on MCB's mission and values and is inclusive of all staff, partners and customers. This process includes quarterly meetings and the minutes and discussions are distributed in accessible formats to all parties involved. Several media are used, i.e. email, listserv, Braille, and audiotape.

Support needed from DLEG for MCB to accomplish our goals with both internal and external partners:

A major issue for MCB is accessibility. It is imperative that DLEG takes a leadership role to ensure that all communications are conveyed to all persons in an accessible format. In addition, it will be necessary that all systems used by the State of Michigan be accessible so that visually impaired staff and customers are included and validated in all aspects of the state workforce and all customer services. This is demonstrated by access deficiencies to the current E-Michigan portal, the State of Michigan MAIN accounting system and the fact that the current process of purchasing hardware, software and systems are not inclusive of accessibility issues from the onset.

In addition, it is sound financial practice to maximize any and all available resources. Therefore, MCB needs DLEG's commitment to obtain increased state funding to ensure that MCB can maximize all federal funds available.

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MCB Critical Goals for FY2006, including “SMART” objectives:

Goals:

1. Continuously improve and implement customer responsive service systems to provide employment opportunities to blind individuals.

- Workforce
- Entrepreneurship
- Retain and Grow Jobs in Michigan

2. Provide premier technology, training, and equipment for MCB clients and staff.

- Workforce
- Retain and Grow Jobs in Michigan

3. Through collaboration, partnerships and communication make Michigan a “cool” and inclusive place for blind people to live, learn, work, raise a family and enjoy life.

- Cool Cities

4. Through collaboration and partnerships expand funding and resources to MCB to increase services to consumers.

- Workforce
- Entrepreneurship
- Retain and Grow Jobs in Michigan

Objectives:

GOAL 1 – CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE AND IMPLEMENT CUSTOMER RESPONSIVE SERVICE SYSTEMS

Objective 1

1.1 By 6/07 complete case file reviews on at least four offices statewide.

Status: Amber – Detroit, Gaylord and Escanaba have been completed. Lansing Regional Office review has been started and will be done no later than December 2007.

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Objective 2

1.2 MCB will request that the Consumer Involvement Council identify and document existing programs and make recommendations on how MCB can positively impact services and outcomes for blind youth in transition. The CIC began this work in January and will make recommendations to the Director and Commission in December 2006.

Status: Green - Completed

Objective 3

1.3 MCB will pursue the Michigan Quality Council's Navigator award, the next step in its Quality Management Initiative (MCB received the Lighthouse award in 2003), compile and submit application to MQC by 12/06 and report results by 8/07. We are going to engage the Quality Council on next steps.

Status: Green – The Executive Director of MQC has met with MCB staff and PAQ Team to discuss next steps. We will continue this item in the 2008 plan.

Objective 4

1.4 MCB in conjunction with MSU and their Project Excellence will collect and tabulate feedback information from a variety of customers including VR clients, IL clients, Training Center students, YLV clients/parents and report results to commissioners quarterly beginning 9/07.

Status: Red – Unable to complete because of Executive Directive on restrictive spending. This objective will be included on the 2008 plan.

Objective 5

1.5 MCB will request that the Elected Operators Committee develop a satisfaction survey for BEP Operators and Trainees to measure the quality of training and support beginning January 06 and report to Commission Board by 9/07.

Status: Green – The information was presented to the EOC and approved by them. It will be presented to the Commission Board in December, 2007.

Objective 6

1.6 Assess skill level development and satisfaction of clients concluding MCBTC training and report to commissioners quarterly beginning 6/07.

Status: Amber – The information gathering tool has been developed and steps have been taken to begin collecting data and have started tracking some students to monitor progress. A new teacher reporting form has also been developed. This will be included in the 2008 plan.

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Objective 7

1.7 Begin information gathering: Tours through MCBTC, Information Packets sent out, and referral phone calls and report to the Director by 10/07.

Status: Amber - MCBTC is keeping track of tours. Steps have been taken to begin tracking phone calls and packets sent from the field offices. This data will be reported to the Board in 2008.

Objective 8

1.8 Develop a mentoring program for clients at MCBTC by 5/07.

Status: Green - Completed

Objective 9

1.9 Develop a mechanism that will ensure transition program statewide throughout the year, not just for summer programs and report progress by June 2007.

Status: Green Completed

Objective 10

1.10 Work with national employment alliances to develop contacts with businesses that are established in multiple states with the intent of looking at how MCB can effectively provide it's clients with ways of obtaining employment with these firms and report to Director by June 2007.

Status: Green - Complete.

Objective 11

1.11 Career Planning class curriculum at MCBTC will be completed by April 1, 2007 and class should begin by April 15, 2007. Subsequent classes will be offered between May and September, 2007.

Status: Green - Completed

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GOAL 2 – PROVIDE PREMIER TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING, AND EQUIPMENT FOR MCB CLIENTS AND STAFF.

Objective 1

2.1 By 6/07 develop and implement web-based tracking capability for the BEP tracking system.

Status: Green – System is operational.

Objective 2

2.2 Upon receipt of official word from the federal government regarding Earmark funds for the Technology Center develop a plan and timeline by 1/07; begin project implementation by 2/07 and report progress to Director and Commissioners by 8/07.

Status: Red –No funds available – will resubmit in 2008.

Objective 3

2.3 Partner with other agencies or groups to do technology training to encourage the partners to do grant writing and help financially with training and report progress to the Director by 9/07.

Status: Green – Steps to partner with outside agencies been initiated and anticipate results and benefits from it in 2008. An objective related to this issue will remain on the 2008 plan.

GOAL 3 – THROUGH COLLABORATION, PARTNERSHIPS, AND COMMUNICATION MAKE MICHIGAN A “COOL” AND INCLUSIVE PLACE FOR BLIND PEOPLE TO LIVE, LEARN, WORK, RAISE A FAMILY, AND ENJOY LIFE.

Objective 1

3.1 Develop new agency brochure for the Employer Services by 8/07.

Status: Green – the Business Services brochure has been printed and distributed to all offices.

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Objective 2

3.2 MCB Communications Committee meetings will be conducted bi-monthly and MCB will offer to present the meetings as a model to the Department by 5/07.

Status: Green.

Objective 3

3.3 Offer four mini-adjustment programs at various locations throughout the state during 2007 and provide services to at least twenty individuals at each location.

Status: Green

Objective 4

3.4 Increase opportunities to recognize performance excellence by MCB Staff by showcasing staff:

1. To include staff profile in the agency bi-monthly newsletter – “*MCB Insight*”
2. Identify staff to be recognized at the State of DLEG meetings held in 2007.

Status: Green -Profiles are being done and we were prepared to do this at the April State of DLEG meetings have been cancelled.

Objective 5

3.5 Develop a pilot project for Deaf/Blind based on 4 teams receiving training to prepare students for active participation in the PCP process and utilizing it in preparation for transition to adult services by 5/07.

Status: Green

Objective 6

3.6 Collaborate with partners in the development of an interagency transition team to meet the needs of students by 12/07.

Status: Green

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Objective 7

3.7 Conduct a workshop for consumers and their families focusing on their need to effectively communicate, find employment, maintain independence, and for support persons to improve their level of awareness and understanding by 04/07.

Status: Green

GOAL 4 - THROUGH COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS EXPAND FUNDING AND RESOURCES TO MCB TO INCREASE SERVICES TO CONSUMERS.

Objective 1

4.1 By 04/07, Participate our first annual workshop for all Michigan Intermediate School Districts' teachers of the Visually Impaired and/or superintendents to provide opportunity for interaction between MCB and VI teachers report on progress 6/07.

Status: Green-Completed but ongoing and need to report progress.

Objective 2

4.2 Develop a contingency plan if the federal earmark funds for the MCBTC Technology Center are not awarded by 3/07 (Grant Writing).

Status: Green

Objective 3

4.3 Explore collaboration with the Office of Aging and area agencies on aging to help leverage human and fiscal resources to more effectively serve older individuals with sight loss and report to Director by 06/07.

Status: Green – Progress has been made past the “exploration” point. It will remain an issue on the 2008 plan and results will be reported to the Board in 2008.

1. Bureau/Agency Customers (Internal /External)

Rehabilitation is a cooperative venture with visually impaired individuals, client families, MCB staff, community, employers, other state, local and federal government agencies, public and private rehabilitation facilities, high school, colleges and training institutions, Business Enterprise Program customers and operators

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2. How are MCB processes/services developed based on the needs of those customer groups?

MCB has several federal and state regulatory policies that drive the processes implemented for blind individuals and the BEP operations. However, the main objective in successfully serving people with vision impairments is to facilitate informed consumer choice. The regulations require that our services are developed based on individual client needs and full consumer participation. Therefore, MCB works within the federal and state bureaucratic system to provide unique services to every client. In addition, we continually solicit input from staff, clients, partners, and external entities to provide excellent customer services in all aspect of daily operations.

Some of the extensive avenues of input and communication are:

- Consumer Involvement Council
- Elected Operators Committee
- MCB Listserv
- Regular Staff Meetings
- Planning and Quality Team
- Five Vision 2020 Focus Design Teams
- Communication Committee
- Client Satisfaction Surveys

3. How is the customer satisfaction data used to modify activities; what trends have been identified?

The data is provided to staff and administration to indicate strengths and to identify areas that need improvement or change. Many trends surface when examining customer satisfaction data. Consistent with the Quality Management principles "*Plan, Do, Study, Act*" (PDSA), we use this process to modify programs in an effort to continuously improve services. Some of the more significant trends identified have been:

- Timeliness of services
- Client Involvement
- Lack of resources (Staffing and Funds)
- The positive value that MCB Training Center adds to the rehabilitation process
- The high level of professionalism of demonstrated by MCB Staff

4. What are the major products/services of the Bureau/Agency?

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The main services of MCB are to provide Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living skills training to blind and visually impaired consumers statewide. In addition, MCB monitors the Randolph Sheppard mandated food service operations throughout the state. These services enable blind persons to achieve and maintain independence and employment

5. What processes are used to measure quality, effectiveness and/or impact of the products and services?

Processes used include: accreditation reviews of regulatory programs; compliance MCB is subject to comply with standards and indicators defined and monitored by the federal government. Failure to comply with the mandates could result in a loss of federal funding.

MCB also self monitors its effectiveness by conducting client satisfaction surveys. Several consumer groups are integrated in the strategic planning process and provide direct input to staff and administration when issues arise. In addition, MCB completes quarterly case reviews to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

6. How MCB measures success:

Data regarding program performance is gathered regularly. Staffing and workload assignments are adjusted accordingly. The information is also used in the development of the agency strategic plan and program revision requests when necessary.

The information gathered from internal and external sources is used to develop the annual Federal "*State Plan*". This plan requires that MCB provide action steps to address specific areas of its service delivery system.

7. How is the data used to manage and improve MCB?

Data regarding program performance is gathered regularly. Staffing and workload assignments are adjusted accordingly. The information is also used in the development of the agency strategic plan and program revision requests when necessary.

The information gathered from internal and external sources is used to develop the annual Federal "*State Plan*". This plan requires that MCB provide action steps to address specific areas of its service delivery system.

8. How are employees both made aware of the measures and how those measures will affect the Bureau/Agency and their jobs?

Staff are made aware of measures and how it effects their jobs through:

Staff meetings; Individual consultations; Emails; Policy directives; Commission meetings/director reports

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CHALLENGES:

- As a result of early retirements when, unlike many other direct field service agencies, Commission vacancies were only filled at a one in four ratio, MCB is still experiencing problems serving its clients, and needs additional staffing to accomplish its mission and goals and to meet the federally mandated performance standards and indicators. MCB also needs DLEG to assist in finding alternative solutions for resources when demands exceed limits.
- MCB needs additional matching funds to fully capture all allocated federal funds and, in fact, General Fund appropriations provided by the Michigan Legislature has been consistently inadequate to match available federal funds and as a result, Michigan is last among all states when it comes to state's supporting federal rehab programs such as the Commission's.
- In recent years MCB has been innovative in finding matching sources to capitalize maximum federal dollars. However, the rising cost of rent in state owned or occupied buildings for the Business Enterprise Program food service operations in Michigan is making it nearly impossible to capture all funds to serve blind citizens in the State of Michigan. The rent for these locations was to be a pass through in MCB's budget as funding was to keep pace with expenses. MCB has not been fully funded for the rent since before FY2000 when the rent was one third of what it is today.
- Another major challenge facing MCB is its Training Center, which has several building operational health and safety issues that have the potential to create emergency situations. The first is an antiquated HVAC system that could fail at any time and parts for the system are obsolete. Hand in hand with that situation is the lack of a backup generator at the Center to provide temporary power in the case of an outage. MCBTC is a 24/7 residential school that houses 25-35 blind students. Many of these students are elderly, frail or have secondary disabilities that could be affected if power were to be interrupted during the cold of winter or the heat of the summer.